

Gaming Device and Method

Cross-Reference to Related Application

5 This application claims the benefit of prior filed, commonly owned, provisional patent application Ser. No. 60/461,683, filed April 9, 2004 and titled " Video Gaming Device and Method".

Background

10 Video Poker is a very popular casino game. Video Poker is played in its various formats by the player making a wager and prompting play. The processor for the gaming device randomly selects, from a data structure storing data representing the deck of playing cards for the game, and displays a first hand of five playing cards. The player using control buttons or a touch screen display, selects which cards to hold and which to discard. The discarded cards are removed from the display and replaced by
15 other randomly selected cards to define a final, five card, Poker holding. The final holding is compared to a predetermined schedule of winning holdings which correspond to Poker holdings.

20 In Fulton, United States Patent 5,820,460, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference, there is disclosed a stud Poker video game. In this game the player makes a first wager and four cards of a five card hand are randomly selected and displayed. Based upon the display of the four cards the player may elect (has the option) to double his wager in the knowledge (if the first four cards are a winning holding) or the hope that a fifth card will result in a winning holding. Play is prompted

and the fifth card is displayed defining the final, five card holding. The final holding is compared to a predetermined schedule of winning Poker holdings and if the player has a winning outcome the are rewarded based upon their first and, if the second wager was made, second wager.

5 Standard Video Poker can be intimidating to some gamblers in that it requires the player to make decisions as to which cards to hold and discard. In games such as the Fulton game described above, play can be frustrating since the player has only one chance at receiving an award (based upon the final hand) and if the player is continually receiving poor hands, play can be frustrating leading a player to avoid such a game.

10 There is a need for a new, Poker based game and method where the player has multiple opportunities to win an award and where the stress associated with the decisions as to holding and discarding are removed. There is also a need in such a game to provide a large jackpot for receiving at least one predetermined outcome.

Summary of the Invention

15 There is, therefore, provided according to the present invention a method for playing a video casino gaming device which includes providing a video display and a computer processor to control the display. A first data structure is also provided for storing data representing at least one deck of playing cards. To play the game according to the method the player makes a first wager and prompts play. The
20 processor, in response to prompting of play, randomly selects a control value and randomly selects and displays at least two playing cards. The control value may be represented as a playing card having a value within a range of values such as a card value randomly selected between an 8 and a Jack. The processor compares the at

least two card holding to the control value and if said holding has a predetermined relationship to said control value, issues a first award to the player. The processor then randomly selects and displays at least one additional card to define at least a three card holding. The processor compares the at least three card holding to said control value and if said at least three cards holding has (i) a predetermined relationship to the control value and (ii) has a higher ranking than the two card holding, issues a second award to the player.

The method may further include the processor randomly selecting and displaying at least one additional card to define at least a four card holding. The processor compares the at least four card holding to said control value and if said at least four cards holding has (i) a predetermined relationship to the control value and (ii) has a higher ranking than the three card holding, issues a third award to the player.

The method may further include the processor randomly selecting and displaying at least one additional card to define at least a five card holding. The processor compares the at least five card holding to said control value and if said at least five cards holding has (i) a predetermined relationship to the control value and (ii) has a higher ranking than the four card holding, issues a fourth award to the player.

As a further feature, prior to the selection and display of the fifth card, the player having an option to increase their wager. Any award based upon the five card holding would then be based upon the sum of the first and second wagers. An additional feature related to the second wager is that the method includes issuing an award, based upon the placing of the second wager, where the five card holding does not achieve a predetermined minimum holding, e.g. none of the cards are equal to to

exceed the control value.

The game method may be embodied as a live table game where the cards are dealt and awards issued according to the method described above.

Brief Description of the Drawings

5 Fig. 1 shows an example of a display for the play of the game; and

FIG. 2 is a logic diagram for play; and

FIG. 3 illustrates a gaming device configured according to the present invention.

Description

10 Turning to the drawings, FIG. 3 shows a device 10 configured for the play of an embodiment of a game of the present invention. The device 10 has a housing 12 which supports and mounts a video display 14 of known construction. The video display may be a VRT, plasma or other electronic display. Disposed within the housing 12 is a computer processor 16, also of known construction.

15 The device 10 includes means for the player to make a wager. In gaming applications, these means may be embodied as a token acceptor 18 and/or a bill acceptor 20, both of known construction. Where the game method of the present invention is incorporated into a novelty game, means are provided for the payer to wager fictitious game credits.

20 In a casino environment, the device 10 may also include a player tracking module 22. By the player presenting a machine readable card or device the player tracking module cooperated with the processor 16 to transmit device 10 and player wagering activity for awarding loyalty points to the player, also as is well known in the art.

To enable the player to interact with the processor to control the play of the game, a plurality of buttons may be provided. For example, button 24 is a bet one credit button whereby the player can wager in one unit increments up to a predetermined maximum wager, e.g. five units. A max bet button 26 permits the player to wager the maximum amount, e.g. five units and prompt play of a hand of the game. Cash out button 28 permits the player to prompt the processor 16 to control, for example, a hopper to dispense accumulated credits into a tray 30 for collection by the player or to write a voucher ticket in the amount of the credits.

Double button 32 permits the player to increase an initial wager such as by doubling the initial wager. As hereinafter set forth, according to one embodiment of the present invention, at a point in the play of the hand of the game the player may increase, e.g. "Double" their initial wager which entitles the player to further awards.

To prompt play as hereinafter set forth, the device 10 includes a draw button 34.

With the features of the device 10 set forth, the play of the game will now be described with reference to FIGS 1 - 3. To initiate play the player enters a first wager, e.g. 5 units at 36 (FIG.3), and prompts the processor 16. The processor 16 randomly selects a control value preferably between predetermined limits. For example where the device 10 and method are based upon standard video Poker, the processor 16 randomly selects at 38 a control value of $8 \leq \text{Jack}$. Other limits may be set where, for example, the game is in a Joker's Wild or Deuces Wild format. With reference to FIG. 1, in the example shown, the processor 16 has selected a control value of 9. The control processor 16 also randomly selects and displays at 40 from a first data structure 42 the first two cards of a Poker hand having at least three cards and

preferably five cards. As shown in FIGS 1 and 3 the processor has selected and displayed the cards of 9 ♥ and Jack ♠. The first data structure 42 contains data representing at least one deck of playing cards and preferably six decks. If the game is played in a Joker's Wild format, each deck would include at least fifty-three cards representing the fifty-two cards of a standard deck plus one or more Jokers.

A second data structure 42 is provided which includes data corresponding to winning outcomes as hereinafter set forth. For the first two cards, the second data structure 44 includes data representing a pair having a value at least as high as the control value, i.e. in the example a pair of 9s or higher. If the first two cards are a high pair (pair of 9s or better) the player is issued a first award according to a first pay schedule. The pay for the high pair may be 3:1 based upon the initial wager. At 46 the processor 16 compares the holding of the first two cards to the data of the second data structure 44 and if the player has a high pair, at 48 the player is issued an initial award. In the example shown, the player has not obtaining a winning outcome for the initial holding of two cards.

Upon completion of the comparison at 46, the processor 16 at 50 displays an additional, randomly selected, third card shown in the example as a King ♠. The holding now of three cards is compared to winning three card holdings stored in the second data structure 44 at 52. To obtain an award based upon the three card holding, the three card holding must result in a Poker ranking higher than the two card holding and must meet the criteria in relation to the control value. The award structure may include the following winning outcomes:

Three card winning outcomes

<u>Holding</u>	<u>Award (X first wager)</u>
High Pair	2
Three of a Kind.	3

If the two card holding was a high pair (pair of 92 or better) there is not award for the three card holding unless the player obtains a three of a kind since the criteria requires that to receive an award for the three card holding it must improve the two card holding. If the player has obtained a winning outcome for the three card holding at 54 an award is issued.

After resolution of the three card holding an additional, fourth card is displayed at 56. As before, for the fourth card holding to be entitled to an award it must improve upon the three card holding and may be awarded according to the schedule of winning outcomes as set forth below:

Four Card Winning Outcomes

<u>Holding</u>	<u>Award (X first wager)</u>
High Pair	1
Two Pair	2
Three of a Kind	2
Four of a kind	15

If, for example the first four cards were as follows:

9♥ 9♦ Jack♠ and 9♣

the player would have been issued a first award based upon the two card holding since it is a high pair. There would be no award for the three card hand, but the four card hand would be entitled to an award since the hand is now a three of a kind (higher ranking than a high pair). The processor 16 at 58 compares the four card holding to the schedule of winning four card holdings of the second data structure 44 and if the player has a winning outcome, an award is issued at 60.

At this point the player at 62 has the option of making a second wager such as by entering a wager equal to their first wager (doubling their initial wager). By so doing the player is entitled to to least one additional award. For example, according to one embodiment, the second wager may be aggregated with the first to entitle the player to an award schedule based upon the aggregate of the first and second wagers thereby doubling the pay out. Preferably, the second wager, if the fifth card results in a award to the player, entitles the player to a separate award represented as the second wager multiplied by a predetermined amount, e.g. five times the second wager.

The second wager, according to a further embodiment, also entitles the player to a consolation award in the event that (1) the player has not obtained any prior award, i.e. the final five card holding is not a high pair or better and (2) none of the five cards has a value at or greater than the control value, i.e. no card of the five card holding is a 9 or better. In this event the player is entitled to an award which preferably is the second wager multiplied by a predetermined multiplier.

A. Player Opts Not to Make a Second Wager

If the player does not make the second wager, the player prompts continued play by depressing the draw button 34 and at 64 the processor 16 displays a fifth, randomly selected card to define a five card holding shown in the drawings as 9♥ J♠ K♠ Q♦ 10♥ which is a straight. At 66 the processor 16 compares the five card holding to the predetermined schedule of winning outcomes stored in the second data structure 44 and if the five card holding is a winning outcome at 68 an award is issued to the player.

For the five card holding, the predetermined schedule of winning outcomes may be as follows. It should be noted that to obtain an award for the fifth card, the ranking

of the holding of the four card hand must be improved by the fifth card.

Five Card Holding (No Second Wager)

	<u>Holding</u>	<u>Award (X wager)</u>
	Royal Flush	1000
5	Straight Flush	100
	5 of a Kind	50
	4 of a Kind	10
	Full House	9
	Flush	6
10	Straight	4
	3 of a Kind	3
	Two Pair	1
	High Pair	1

15 Since, in the example shown in the drawings, the five card holding is a straight the player would be paid 5 (first bet) X 4 = 20 units.

The hand is now concluded and the player may make a new first wager to play another hand.

B. Player Makes Second Wager

20 If the player opts to make the second wager, he does so and the processor 16 is prompted to display the randomly selected fifth card to define the five card holding. At 66 the five card holding is compared to a predetermined award schedule and if the player is entitled to an award at 68 the award is issued. The award schedule may be as follows.

25 Five Card Holding (Second Wager Made)

	<u>Holding</u>	<u>Award (X First Wager)</u>	
	Royal Flush	1000	+ 5X Second Wager
	Straight Flush	100	+ 5X Second Wager
30	5 of a Kind	50	+ 5X Second Wager
	4 of a Kind	10	+ 5X Second Wager
	Full House	9	+ 5X Second Wager
	Flush	6	+ 5X Second Wager

Straight	4	+ 5X Second Wager
3 of a Kind	3	+ 5X Second Wager
Two Pair	1	+ 5X Second Wager
High Pair	1	+ 5X Second Wager
No Card \geq Control Value		5X Second Wager

As before, to obtain an award for the five card holding, the fifth card must improve the ranking of the four card holding. According to the example of the drawings, the player obtained a five card straight and thus would receive 5 (First Wager) X 4 + 5 (Second Wager) X 5 = 45 units.

While I have shown certain embodiments of the present invention it should be understood that it can be modified. For example, different pay schedules may be adopted, the player may make first and second wagers of any amount they desire, the second wager may be restricted to a multiple of the first wager, the game could be played in a deuces wild or Jokers wild format and the first data structure may store data representing multiple decks of cards. Furthermore, if desired, at one or more points during the progression of the hand the player may be provided an opportunity to discard and replace a card. For example, the player may be afforded the opportunity to discard the third card and receive a replacement therefor.